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AN

HEROIC EPISTLE

TO

Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS, Knight,

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S WORKS,

AND AUTHOR OF A LATE

DISSERTATION ON ORIENTAL GARDENING.

ENRICHED WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES,

CHIEFLY EXTRACTED FROM THAT ELABORATE PERFORMANCE.

Non omnes arbuſta juvant, humileſque myricæ. VIRGIL.

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PREFACE.

THIS Poem was written laſt ſummer, immediately after the Publication of Sir William Chambers's Diſſertation; but the Bookſeller, to whom it was offered, declined publiſhing it, till the Town was full.—His reaſon for this, is obvious; yet it would hardly have weighed with the Author, had he not thought, that his Hero's fame would increaſe in proportion to his Publiſher's profit. However he foreſaw, that, by this delay, one inconvenience might ariſe, which this Preface is written to remove.

Readers of the preſent generation are ſo very inattentive to what they read, that it is probable, one half of Sir William's may have forgotten the principles which this book inculcates. Let theſe, then, be reminded, that it is the author's profeſt aim in extolling the taſte of the Chineſe, to condemn that mean and paltry manner which Kent introduced; which Southcote, Hamilton, and Brown followed, and which, to our national diſgrace, is called the Engliſh ſtyle of gardening. He ſhews the poverty of this taſte, by aptly comparing it to a dinner, which conſiſted of three groſs pieces, three times repeated; and proves to a demonſtration,

that Nature herſelf is incapable of pleaſing, without the aſſiſtance of Art, and that too of the moſt luxuriant kind. In ſhort, ſuch art as is diſplayed in the Emperor's garden of Yven-Ming-Yven, near Pekin; where fine lizards, and fine women, human giants, and giant baboons, make but a ſmall part of the ſuperb ſcenery. He teaches us, that a perfect garden muſt contain within itſelf all the amuſements of a great city; that *urbs in rure*, not *rus in urbe*, is the thing, which an improver of true taſte ought to aim at. He ſays—but it is impoſſible to abridge all that he ſays:—Let this therefore ſuffice, to tempt the reader again to peruſe his invaluable Diſſertation, ſince without it, he will never reliſh half the beauties of the following Epiſtle; for (if her Majeſty's Zebra, and the powder mills at Hounſlow be excepted) there is ſcarce a ſingle image in it, which is not taken from that work.

But though the images be borrowed, the author claims ſome ſmall merit from his application of them. Sir William ſays too modeſtly, "that European artiſts muſt not hope to rival Oriental ſplendor." The poet ſhews, that European artiſts may eaſily rival it; and, that Richmond gardens with only the addition of a new bridge to join them to Brentford, may be new modelled, perfectly *à la Chinois*. He exhorts his Knight to undertake the glorious taſk, and leaves no cauſe to doubt, but that, under the auſpicious patronage he now ſo juſtly enjoys, added to the *ready* vote of thoſe who furniſh ways and means, the royal work will ſpeedily be compleated.

Knightſbridge, Jan. 20th.

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HEROIC EPISTLE

T O

Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS, Knight.

KNIGHT of the Polar Star! by Fortune plac'd,
To ſhine the Cynoſure of Britiſh taſte;
Whoſe orb collects in one refulgent view,
The ſcatter'd glories of Chineſe Virtù;

Verſe 2. [Cynoſure of Britiſh taſte.] Cynoſure, an affected phraſe. Cynoſura is the conſtellation of Urſa Minor, or the Leſſer Bear, the next ſtar to the Pole. Dr. Newton, on the word in Milton.

And ſpread their luſtre in ſo broad a blaze,
That Kings themſelves are dazzled, while they gaze,
O let the Muſe attend thy march ſublime,
And, with thy proſe, capariſon her rhyme;
Teach her, like thee, to gild her ſplendid ſong,
With ſcenes of Yven-Ming, and ſayings of Li-Tſong;
Like thee to ſcorn Dame Nature's ſimple fence;
Leap each Ha Ha of truth and common ſenſe;
And proudly riſing in her bold career,
Demand attention from the gracious ear
Of him, whom we and all the world admit,
Patron ſupreme of ſcience, taſte, and wit.

Verſe 10. [With ſcenes of Yven-Ming.] One of the Imperial gardens at Pekin. [Sayings of Li-Tſong.] "Many trees, ſhrubs, and flowers," ſayeth Li-Tſong, a Chineſe author of great antiquity, "thrive beſt in low, moiſt ſituations; many on hills and mountains; ſome require a rich ſoil; but others will grow on clay, in ſand, or even upon rocks, and in the water: to ſome a ſunny expoſition is neceſſary; but for others the ſhade is preferable. There are plants which thrive beſt in expoſed ſituations, but in general, ſhelter is requiſite. The ſkilful gardener, to whom ſtudy and experience have taught theſe qualities, carefully attends to them in his operations; knowing that thereon depend the health and growth of his plants; and conſequently the beauty of his plantations." Vide Diſſ. p. 77. The reader, I preſume, will readily allow, that he never met with ſo much recondite truth, as this ancient Chineſe here exhibits.

Does Envy doubt? Witneſs ye choſen train!
Who breathe the ſweets of his Saturnian reign;
Witneſs ye H*lls, ye J*ns*ns, Sc*ts, S*bb*s,
Hark to my call, for ſome of you have ears.
Let D**d H*e, from the remoteſt North,
In ſee-ſaw ſceptic ſcruples hint his worth;
D**d, who there ſupinely deigns to lye
The fatteſt Hog of Epicurus' ſty;
Tho' drunk with Gallic wine, and Gallic praiſe,
D**d ſhall bleſs Old England's halcyon days;
The mighty Home bemir'd in proſe ſo long,
Again ſhall ſtalk upon the ſtilts of ſong:
While bold Mac-Oſſian, wont in Ghoſts to deal,
Bids candid Smollet from his coffin ſteal;
Bids Mallock quit his ſweet Elyſian reſt,
Sunk in his St. John's philoſophic breaſt,
And, like old Orpheus, make ſome ſtrong effort
To come from Hell, and warble *truth at Court*.

Verſe 34. [Truth at Court.] Vide (if it be extant) a poem under this title, for which (or for the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's philoſophical writings) the perſon here mentioned, received a conſiderable penſion in the time of Lord B—te's adminiſtration.

There

There was a time, " in Eſher's peaceful grove,
" When Kent and Nature vy'd for Pelham's love,"
That Pope beheld them with auſpicious ſmile,
And own'd that Beauty bleſt their mutual toil.
Miſtaken Bard! could ſuch a pair deſign
Scenes fit to live in thy immortal line?
Hadſt thou been born in this enlighten'd day,
Felt, as we feel, Taſte's oriental ray,
Thy ſatire ſure had given them both a ſtab,
Called Kent a Driveller, and the Nymph a Drab.
For what is Nature? Ring her changes round,
Her three flat notes are water, plants, and ground;

Verſe 45. [For what is Nature?] This is the great and fundamental axiom, on which oriental taſte is founded. It is therefore expreſſed here with the greateſt preciſion, and in the identical phraſe of the great original. The figurative terms, and even the explanatory ſimile are entirely borrowed from Sir William's Diſſertation. " *Nature* (ſays the Chineſe, or Sir William for them) affords us but few materials to work with. *Plants*, *ground*, and *water*, are her only productions; and, though both the forms and arrangements of theſe may be varied to an incredible degree, yet they have but few ſtriking varieties, the reſt being of the nature of *changes rung upon bells*, which, though in reality different, ſtill produce the ſame uniform kind of *gingling*; the variation being too minute to be eaſily perceived." " *Art* muſt therefore ſupply *the ſcantineſs of Nature*," &c. &c. page 14. And again, " Our larger works are only a repetition of the ſmall ones, *like the honeſt Bachelor's feaſt*, which conſiſted in nothing but a multiplication of his own dinner; *three legs of mutton and turneps, three roaſted geeſe, and three buttered apple-pies*." Preface, page 7.

Prolong

Prolong the peal, yet ſpite of all your clatter,
The tedious chime is ſtill ground, plants, and water.
So, when ſome John his dull invention racks,
To rival Boodle's dinners, or Almack's;
Three uncouth legs of mutton ſhock our eyes,
Three roaſted geeſe, three butter'd apple-pies.

Come then, prolifick art, and with thee bring
The charms that riſe from thy exhauſtleſs ſpring;
To Richmond come, for ſee untutor'd Brown
Deſtroys thoſe wonders which were once thy own.
Lo, from his melon-ground the peaſant ſlave
Has rudely ruſh'd, and levell'd Merlin's Cave;
Knock'd down the waxen Wizzard, ſeiz'd his wand,
Transform'd to lawn what late was Fairy land;
And marr'd, with impious hand, each ſweet deſign
Of Stephen Duck, and good Queen Caroline.

Haſte, bid yon livelong Terras re-aſcend,
Replace each viſta, ſtraighten every bend;
Shut out the Thames; ſhall that ignoble thing
Approach the preſence of great Ocean's King?
No! let Barbaric glories feaſt his eyes,
Auguſt Pagodas round his palace riſe,
And finiſh'd Richmond open to his view,
" A work to wonder at, perhaps a Kew."

Nor reſt we here, but, at our magic call,
Monkies ſhall climb our trees, and lizards crawl;

Verſe 67. [No! let Barbaric glories.] So Milton.

" Where the gorgeous eaſt with richeſt hand
Showers on her Kings *Barbaric* pearl and gold."

Verſe 72. [Monkies ſhall climb our trees.] " In their loſty woods *ſerpents* and *lizards* of many beautiful ſorts crawl upon the ground. Innumerable *monkies*, *cats*, and *parots* clamber upon the trees." Page 40. " In their lakes are many *iſlands*, ſome ſmall, ſome large, amongſt which are often ſeen ſtalking along, *the elephant*, the rhinoceros, the dromedary, oſtrich, and the giant baboon." Page 66. " They keep, in their inchanted ſcenes, a ſurpriſing variety of monſtrous birds, reptiles and animals, which are tamed by art, and guarded by enormous *dogs of Tibet*, and *African giants*, in the habits of magicians." Page 42. " Sometimes in this romantic excurſion, the paſſenger finds himſelf in extenſive receſſes, ſurrounded with arbours of jeſſamine, vine, and roſes; where beauteous *Tartarean damſels*, in looſe tranſparant robes that flutter in the air, preſent him with rich wines, &c. and invite him to taſte the ſweets of retirement, on Perſian carpets, and beds of Camuſakin down." Page 40.

Huge

Huge dogs of Tibet bark in yonder grove,
Here parrots prate, there cats make cruel love;
In ſome fair iſland will we turn to graſs
(With the Queen's leave) her elephant and aſs.
Giants from Africa ſhall guard the glades,
Where hiſs our ſnakes, where ſport our Tartar maids;
Or, wanting theſe, from Charlotte Hayes we bring,
Damſels alike adroit to ſport and ſting.

Now to our lawns of dalliance and delight,
Join we the groves of horror and affright;
This to atchieve no foreign aids we try,
Thy gibbets, Bagſhot! ſhall our wants ſupply;
Hounſlow, whoſe heath ſublimer terror fills,
Shall with her gibbets lend her powder mills.

Verſe 84. [Thy gibbets, Bagſhot.] "Their ſcenes of terror are compoſed of gloomy woods, &c. *gibbets*, croſſes, wheels, and the whole apparatus of torture are ſeen from the roads. Here too they conceal in cavities, on the ſummits of the higheſt mountains, foundaries, lime-kilns, and glaſs-works, which ſend forth large volumes of flame, and continued columns of thick ſmoke, that give to theſe mountains the appearance of Volcanos." Page 37. "Here the paſſenger from time to time is ſurprized with repeated ſhocks of electrical impulſe; the earth trembles under him by the power of confined air," &c. Page 39. Now to produce both theſe effects, viz. the appearance of volcanos and earthquakes, we have here ſubſtituted the occaſional exploſion of a *powder mill*, which (if there be not too much ſimplicity in the contrivance) it is apprehended will at once anſwer all the purpoſes of *lime-kilns* and *electrical machines*, and imitate *thunder* and the *exploſion of cannon* into the bargain. Vide page 40.

Here

Here too, O King of Vengeance, in thy fane,
Tremendous Wilkes ſhall rattle his gold chain;
And round that fane on many a Tyburn tree,
Hang fragments dire of Newgate-hiſtory;
On this ſhall H*ll*d's dying ſpeech be read,
Here B—te's confeſſion, and his wooden head;
While all the minor plunderers of the age,
(Too numerous far for this contracted page)
The R*g*ys, —— 's, Mungos, B*ds*ws there,
In ſtraw ſtuft effigy, ſhall kick the air.
But ſay, ye powers, who come when fancy calls,
Where ſhall our mimic London rear her walls?

Verſe 87. [Here too, O king of Vengeance, &c.] "In the moſt diſmal receſſes of the woods, are temples dedicated to the *King of Vengeance*, near which are placed pillars of ſtone, with *pathetic deſcriptions of tragical events*; and many acts of cruelty perpetrated there by *outlaws* and *robbers*." Page 37.

Verſe 88. [Tremendous Wilkes.] This was written while Mr. Wilkes was Sheriff of London, and when it was to be feared he would rattle his chain a year longer as Lord Mayor.

Verſe 98. [Where ſhall our mimic London, &c.] "There is likewiſe in the ſame garden, viz. Yven-Ming Yven, near Pekin, *a fortified town*, with its ports, ſtreets, public ſquares, temples, markets, ſhops, and tribunals of juſtice; in ſhort, with every thing that is at Pekin, only on a ſmaller ſcale.

"In

That Eaſtern feature, Art muſt next produce,
Tho' not for preſent yet for future uſe
Our ſons ſome ſlave of greatneſs may behold,
Caſt in the genuine Aſiatic mould:
Who of three realms ſhall condeſcend to know
No more than he can ſpy from Windſor's brow;
For Him that bleſſing of a better time,
The Muſe ſhall deal awhile in brick and lime;
Surpaſs the bold ΑΔΕΛΦΙ in deſign,
And o'er the Thames fling one ſtupendous line
Of marble arches, in a bridge, that cuts
From Richmond Ferry ſlant to Brentford Butts.
Brentford with London's charms will we adorn;
Brentford, the biſhoprick of Parſon Horne.

" In this town the Emperors of China, who are too much *the ſlaves of their greatneſs* to appear in public, and their women, who are excluded from it by cuſtom, are frequently diverted with the hurry and buſtle of the capital, which is there repreſented, ſeveral times in the year, by the eunuchs of the palace." Page 32.

Verſe 109. [Of marble arches.] Sir William's enormous account of Chineſe *bridges*, too long to be here inſerted. Vide page 53.

There at one glance, the royal eye ſhall meet
Each varied beauty of St. James's Street;
Stout T*lb*t there ſhall ply with hackney chair
And Patriot Betty fix her fruit-ſhop there.
Like diſtant thunder, now the coach of ſtate
Rolls o'er the bridge, that groans beneath its weight.
The court hath croſt the ſtream; the ſports begin;
Now N**l preaches of rebellion's ſin:
And as the powers of his ſtrong pathos riſe,
Lo, brazen tears fall from Sir Fl**r's eyes.
While ſkulking round the pews, that babe of grace,
Who ne'er before at ſermon ſhew'd his face,
See Jemmy Twitcher ſhambles; ſtop! ſtop thief!
He's ſtol'n the E* of D*nb*h's handkerchief.

Verſe 115. [Stout T**t, &c.] "Some of theſe eunuchs perſonate porters." Page 32.

Verſe 116. [And Patriot Betty.] "Fruits and all ſorts of refreſhments are cried about the ſtreets in this mock city." Page 33.

Verſe 122. [Lo brazen tears, &c.]

"Drew *iron* tears down Pluto's cheek." Milton.

Verſe 125. [See Jemmy Twitcher ſhambles.] "Neither are thieves, pick-pockets, and ſharpers forgot in theſe feſtivals; that noble profeſſion is uſually allotted to a good number of the moſt dextrous eunuchs." Vide, ibid.

Let

Let B*rr*t*n arreſt him in mock fury,
And M**d hang the knave without a jury.
But hark the voice of battle ſhouts from far,
The Jews and Maccaroni's are at war:
The Jews prevail, and, thund'ring from the ſtocks,
They ſeize, they bind, they circumciſe C*s F*.
Fair Schw***n ſmiles the ſport to ſee,
And all the Maids of Honour cry Te! He!

Be theſe the rural paſtimes that attend
Great B*nſw*k's leiſure: theſe ſhall beſt unbend
His royal mind, whene'er, from ſtate withdrawn,
He treads the velvet of his Richmond lawn;

Verſe 127. [Let B***n.] "The watch ſeizes on the culprit." Vide, ibid.
Verſe 128. [And M**d, &c.] "He is conveyed before the judge, and ſometimes ſeverely baſtinadoed." Ibid.
Verſe 129. [But hark, &c.] "Quarrels happen—battles enſue." Ibid.
Verſe 132. [Circumciſe C*s F*.] Every liberty is permitted, there is no diſtinction of perſons. Ibid.
Verſe 134 [And all the maids of honour, &c.] "This is done to divert his Imperial Majeſty, and the ladies of his train." Vide, ibid.

Theſe

Theſe ſhall prolong his Aſiatic dream,
Tho' Europe's balance trembles on its beam.
And thou, Sir William! while thy plaſtic hand
Creates each wonder, which thy Bard has plann'd,
While, as thy art commands, obſequious riſe
Whate'er can pleaſe, or frighten, or ſurprize,
O! let that Bard his Knight's protection claim,
And ſhare, like faithful Sancho, Quixote's fam(

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